

Coraliodiscus Batalin (Gesneriaceae): A New Generic Record for Peninsular India

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Abstract

The genus *Coraliodiscus* Batalin, so far known from the Himalayas and Eastern Asia, is reported for the first time from the Peninsular India. It is represented in the northern Western Ghats by *C. lanuginosus* (Wallich ex R. Br.) B.L. Burt. This species is described and illustrated.

Keywords: *Coraliodiscus lanuginosus*, New generic and species record, Maharashtra, The Western Ghats

Introduction

We collected a few interesting specimens belonging to the family Gesneriaceae from Chavaneshwar hills (17°55' 471" N latitude and 73°59' 868" E longitude) in Satara district of Maharashtra State. Critical study and scrutiny of floristic works by Hooker (1885), Collett (1902), Babu (1977), Polunin and Stainton (1984), Stainton (2003) and Zheng-yi and Raven (1998) helped us to identify these specimens as *Coraliodiscus lanuginosus* (Wallich ex R. Br.) B.L. Burt. The genus *Coraliodiscus* Batalin has 18 species distributed from the Himalayas to North Western China and Indo-China. Of these, three are reported from the Himalayan region (Babu, 1977). The present species is so far recorded only from the Himalayas (North India, Nepal, Bhutan), Thailand, Indo-china and North Western China. Its occurrence in Peninsular India is phytogeographically significant.

Coraliodiscus lanuginosus (Wallich ex R. Br.) B. L. Burt, Gard. Chron. ser. 3, 122(3180): 212. 1947; Hara, Fl. E. Himal. 298. 1966. *Didymocarpus lanuginosus* Wallich ex R. Br., On Cyrtandreae 118. 1839. *Didissandra lanuginosa* C. B. Clarke in A. DC., Monogr. Phan. 5: 66. 1883; C. B. Clarke in Hook. f., Fl. Brit. India 4: 355. 1884.

Fig. 1

Scapigerous, perennial herbs. Leaves radical, crowded, stalked, spreading, elliptic to ovate to obovate, obtuse, narrowed towards base, crenate, deciduously hirsute above, fulvous woolly beneath when young, petiolate;

petiole 0.8-1.8 cm long, hairy. Scapes several, 3 - 5 cm long, fulvous-shaggy. Flowers 2 or 3 in lax terminal cymes; bracts minute, acuminate; pedicels 5 - 8 mm long, hairy; calyx segments unequal in size, upper two sepals smaller, 2-3 mm long, lower three larger, 3-4 mm long, lanceolate, hairy; corolla purple, 0.8 - 1.5 cm long, 2-lipped, upper lip erect, 2-lobed, 1-2 mm long, lower lip 3-lobed, 3-4 mm long; tube cylindric, glabrous outside, densely hairy inside; stamens 4, didynamous, adnate to corolla tube at base, anthers peltate, cohering in pairs; disc ring-like; pistil 5-7 mm long, ovary oblong, unilocular; placentas 2, parietal; style slender; stigma bilobed. Capsule glabrous, narrowly oblong, 4-grooved, dehiscing loculicidally; seeds minute, brown, tapering at both ends, 0.5-0.8 x 0.25 mm, testa reticulate.

Flowering & Fruiting: August - October.

Habitat: Grows on the steep slopes in crevices of moist rocks at an altitude of about 1140 m.

Distribution: India ((Shimla, Dehra Dun, Sikkim, Maharashtra), Nepal, Bhutan, Thailand, Indo-china, North Western China.

Specimens Examined: INDIA, Maharashtra, Satara District, Chavaneshwar hill, 1140 m. 19.09.2005, Mayur Kamble 1168 (CAL). E. Himalaya, Rimbick to Palamjua, 10.10.1941, Dr. K. Biswas 5779 (CAL). N. W. Himalaya, Kumaon District, Shimla, Naini Tal 22.07.1900, Inayat 24824 (CAL); Sikkim,

Toong Mt. 4700 ft, 06.07.1909, *Smith & Cave* 874 (CAL);
Teesta Valley, 9800 ft, 05.07.1909, *Smith & Cave* 822 (CAL).
Note: *Corallo-discus lanuginosus* is a highly variable

species (Zheng-yi and Raven, 1998), especially in
density and type of indumentum (amount and type),
shape, size, margin, and texture of leaf blade and

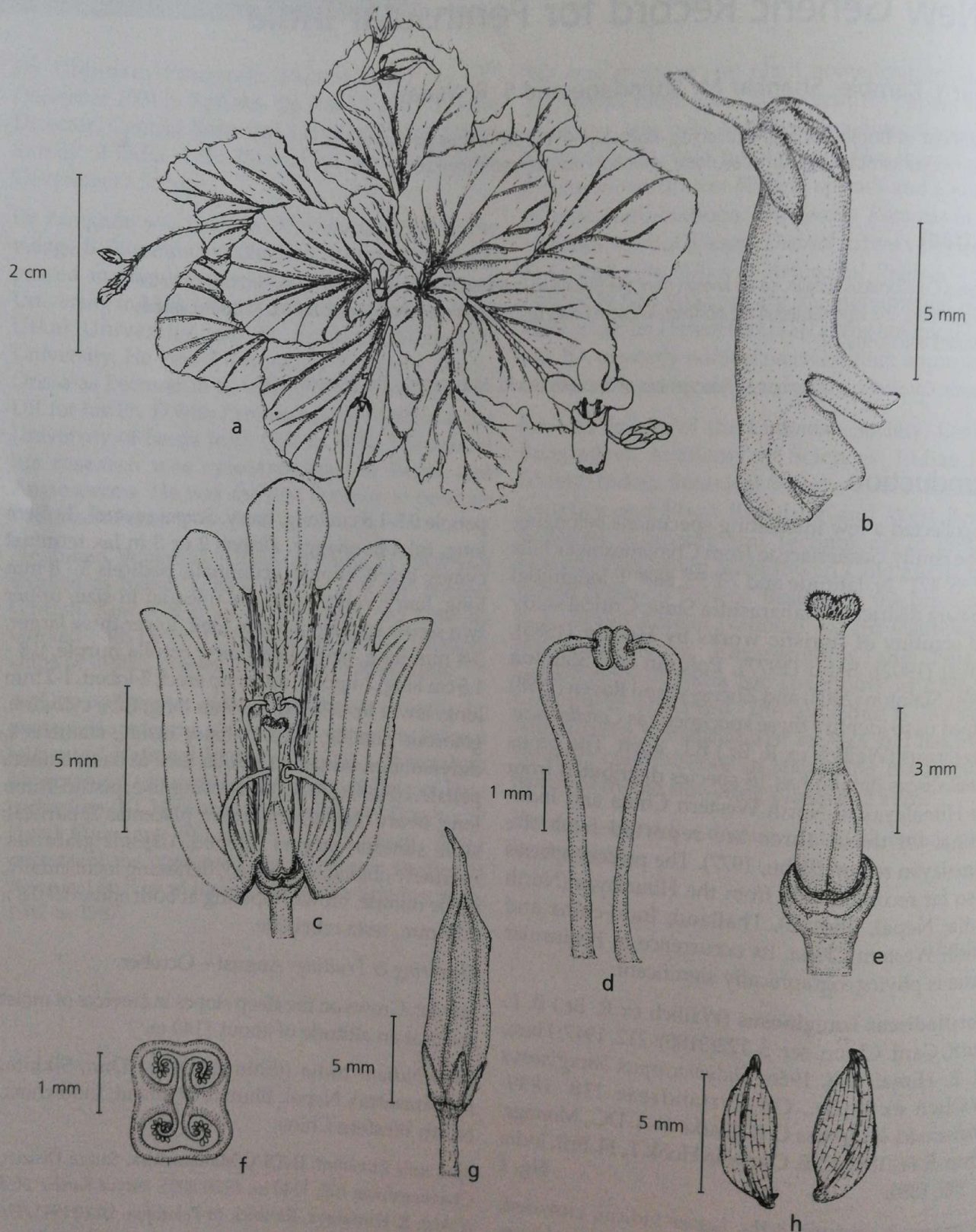


Figure 1. *Corallo-discus lanuginosus* (Wallich ex R. Br.) B. L. Burt - a. Habit; b. Flower; c. Flower, dissected; d. Stamens; e. Pistil; f. Ovary, transverse section; g. Fruit; h. Seeds

number and size of flowers. This species is of rare occurrence and only 20-25 individuals were observed at Chavaneshwar hills in Satara.

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